

Robert S. Leventhal  
The College of William and Mary  
(Williamsburg, VA, USA)

**Transcendental or Material Oscillation?**  
**An Alternative Reading of Friedrich Schlegel's**  
*Alternating Principle (Wechselerweis)*

In his review of F.H. Jacobi's *Woldemar*, which appeared in Reichardt's journal *Deutschland* in 1796, (KFSA II, 70–74) Schlegel overstepped the narrow boundaries of a strict literary review and used the opportunity to characterize Jacobi's philosophy as a whole. Against the requirements of philosophical reason, which Jacobi believed necessarily succumbed to either a "consistent" dogmatism or the "mere shadows" of idealism, Jacobi had embraced a philosophy of "belief" (*Glauben*), of "wondrous revelation" (*Offenbarung*) opposed to every form of reason. According to Schlegel, Jacobi had reduced philosophy to "der in Begriffe und Worte gebrachte Geist eines Individuellen Lebens," (KFSA II, 71) and had thereby failed to recognize the two most basic suppositions of philosophy, namely the *will to truth* and the *striving for a systematic, scientific totality*. Schlegel wrote: "Aber nur wenn Streben nach Wahrheit und Wissenschaft die Seele dieses Lebens ist, kann der Geist desselben philosophisch genannt werden." (KFSA II, 71) As is often the case with Schlegel, there is an inherent ambiguity with regard to these two claims. It hinges on whether we place the emphasis on the "will" and "striving" or on the claim to scientific systematicity and totality. With this statement, and in the text which followed it, Schlegel began his philosophical inquiry into the status of the basic philosophical proposition (*Grundsatz*). The notion that philosophy must and could be grounded in one, fundamental proposition, specifically, the basic proposition of consciousness (*Satz des Bewußtseins*), had been advanced by Karl Leonhard Reinhold in his *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* (1789) and – in a more systematic fashion – by J.G. Fichte in the various versions of his *Wissenschaftslehre*, beginning in 1794. Skepticism

regarding such a project was also widespread.<sup>1</sup> Schlegel forged his own response, not merely to Jacobi's departure from reason, but also to Fichte's idealism and the emergent radical skepticism of the time. The result of his critique, his reply to Fichte's fundamental proposition (*Grundsatz*) and Jacobi's critique that the final ground is "inexplicable" and ultimately based on belief/faith, was the *Wechselerweis*, or what has come to be called the "alternating principle."<sup>2</sup> Navigating through Reinhold, Jacobi, and Fichte, Schlegel was exploring a new form of doing philosophy. It required three things: the absence of *foundations*, *communicativity*, and *interdisciplinarity*.

In the last ten years, Friedrich Schlegel's early philosophical theory 1795–1800 has been the focal point of a re-evaluation of the Romantic reception and transformation of German idealist philosophy, Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* in particular. This theory emerges in the context of the philosophical debate in Jena in the years 1795–97, as a result of Schlegel's reaction to the skepticism regarding first-principles circulating around Jena at the time and as a complex process of Schlegel's appropriation and critique – his "working through" – various existing philosophical positions, above all, those of Spinoza, F.H. Jacobi, and J.G. Fichte. Much of the scholarship that emerged in the 1990s concerned the nature, status, and function of Schlegel's "alternating principle," what he himself in various iterations termed *Wechselerweis*, *Wechselgrund*, *Wechselgrundsatz*, *Wechselbeweis*, *Wechselbegriff*, and *Wechselbestimmung*. In Schlegel's writing during the period in question, this "principle" is articulated as a direct antipode to and attack on the absolute, unconditional fundamental principle (*Grundsatz*) of philosophy postulated by Fichte in his *Grundlagen der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* and *Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794, "I=I". Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* did not conclude, of course, with the "original proposition" "I=I"; he additionally specified a secondary, conditional and derivative *supplement* to this original and absolutely unconditional proposition – "Not-I" – and formulated the relation of the two propositions in terms of an alternating determination (*Wechselbestimmung*). (SW I, 108f, 131, 140–141, 153, 185) However, Schlegel's "alternating principle" implies a conception of philosophi-

---

1 On the "grundsatzphilosophische Skepsis" of Franz Paul von Herbert, Johann Benjamin Erhard, and Carl Christian Erhard Schmid, see: Frank 1996a, 403–436.

2 There has been suggestive and interesting work relating the romantic notion of oscillation to Blanchot and to contemporary philosophy, specifically Critchley 2004, 38 and Critchley 2005, 51–52.

cal activity that has dispensed with the requirement for a singular, fundamental, first principle altogether. Schlegel's "alternation" begins to articulate the relationality of determinations and the performativity of positing, on the one hand no longer grounded in the one, absolute, fundamental principle (*Grundsatz*), and, on the other, limiting and self-limiting in terms of their intrinsic materiality, contingency, and connectivity. This was, in my view, a direct result of Schlegel's anti-transcendental, hermeneutical-philological strategy that he was formulating at the same time and achieved its most precise formulation in his notebooks *Zur Philologie* (1797).<sup>3</sup>

In this essay, my aim is twofold: first, I will discuss three existing readings of Schlegel's "alternating principle" – readings offered by the late Ernst Behler, Manfred Frank, and Guido Naschert – in order to present the existing scholarship on the subject and to point out what I see as a shared underlying transcendental argument present in these readings. Secondly, I will offer an alternative argument of this principle that questions the transcendental version of the 'alternating principle.' My reading locates Schlegel's alternating or oscillating principle within a very different philosophical discourse: an anti-foundationalist, material-hermeneutic discourse in which one does not begin with any absolutely secure and isolated fundamental principles, but rather, any such basic principles are gained in an oscillating action from a *micrology of the particular* (*Buchstabe*) and through *intra-* and *interdisciplinary* suspension of boundaries. Schlegel's is not merely a critique of the *Grundsatz*; more significantly, the positing (*setzen*) of the principle, one could say its rhetorical or discursive function, is wrested from what I view as a *transcendental philosophy of the subject* that persists in the existent readings.

In Schlegel's counter-discourse, the "alternating principle" is historicized, temporalized, set into motion, deployed as part of historical and philological critique of transcendental philosophy and idealism. By questioning such a transcendental reading of Schlegel's "alternating principle," we do not seek to undermine the *systematic* interest and intent of Schlegel's discourse. And this is where I think there has been confusion in the existing scholarship: the conflation of foundations and systematicity. Schlegel does not depart from the philosophical project altogether. Quite the contrary, Schlegel's critique demands

3 The notebooks *Zur Philologie I & II* are in KFSa, Vol. XVI. They are also available now as electronic text thanks to the work of Dr. Volker Deubel at the University of Munich Text-Archive: <http://mut.mhn.de/>.

systematicity that historicizes the philosophical project and engages it with other disciplines, specifically philology and rhetoric. This distinction – the requirement of an *historical* and *systematic*, cyclical procedure in contradistinction to the transcendental operation – will prove decisive in the considerations below, where the critique of the transcendental leads to a *material hermeneutics*. What is at stake in such a reading and in its distinction to the transcendental interpretation is not merely our understanding of the nature and role of German romantic philosophy, currently an important topic of considerable debate,<sup>4</sup> but how we situate this important impulse within the broader constellation of the emergence of the modern ‘humanities.’ The recent rehabilitation of the philosophy of the subject has contributed to and been influenced by this reading of early German romantic philosophy, especially in the case of the work of Manfred Frank. (Frank 1997, 875–913; Frank 1996b) But the transcendental reading of Schlegel’s alternating principle has also run parallel to more recent historical reconstructions of post-Kantian idealism in general as well, many of which, to some extent, also read Schlegel’s theory as an appropriation, an extension or adaptation of transcendental philosophy.<sup>5</sup> This essay seeks to interrogate what I view to be a dominant, one-sided idealistic-transcendental reading of Schlegel’s alternating principle, to counter it with a reconstruction in which the material, discursive, and (inter-)disciplinary force of Schlegel’s arguments come more clearly to the fore.

The first explicit thematization of Schlegel’s “alternating principle” as far as I have been able to detect was in 1975, when the late Ernst Behler noted in his excellent introduction to Volume VIII of the *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe* “Schlegels frühe Position in der Ausbildung der idealistischen Philosophie” the following: “Dass für [Schlegel] ein ‘bedingter und bedingender Wechselerweis der Grund der Philosophie’ war, zeigte sich bereits in der Jacobi-Rezension und ist ein beherrschender Gedanke seiner frühen philosophischen Heften.” (Behler 1963, xlii) Behler was referring to Schlegel’s review of Jacobi’s *Woldemar*. There, Schlegel wrote:

---

4 To mention just a few of the most important contributions: Michael Elsässer 1991; Frank 1997 and 2003; Beiser 2003.

5 See, for example, Henrich 1992, 127: “Synthesen von Fichte und Spinoza, der über Jacobi angeeignet wurde, sind wenig später von vielen ausgearbeitet worden. Die bedeutendsten unter ihnen sind Novalis und Friedrich Schlegel gewesen.” Also, Henrich 1991, 228. On Henrich’s view, it is Hölderlin who makes the decisive break, preparing the way for Schelling and Hegel, with his concept of *Seyn*.

– Was Jacobi dafür anführt: ‚daß jeder Erweis schon etwas Erwiesenes voraussetze‘ (Spin. S. 225); gilt nur wider diejenigen Denker, welche von einem einzigen Erweis ausgehn. Wie wenn nun aber ein von außen unbedingter, gegenseitig aber bedingter und sich bedingender Wechselweis der Grund der Philosophie ware? (KFSA II, 72)

Referring to the second edition of Jacobi's *Über die Lehre des Spinoza* (1789), Schlegel's "alternating principle" suggests an alternative to Jacobi's critique of an *infinite regression* and initiates a series of discursive attempts to place philosophy in relation to philology, history, and rhetoric.

Schlegel was not completely dismissive of Jacobi's critique. What Schlegel sees in Jacobi is an obsessive compulsion for consistency, a fear of allowing the "offenbare Widersprüche, Fehlschlüsse und Zweideutigkeiten"<sup>6</sup> to emerge fully. Jacobi's polemic is valid, in Schlegel's view, for those thinkers who feel compelled to reduce philosophy to one, fundamental principle. In this, Schlegel identifies enormous value in the polemical element of Jacobi's thought; in discerning the insufficiency of a fully rational final grounding, Jacobi actually touched upon the "herrschende[n] Denkart des Zeitalters mit kritischem Geist." (KFSA II, 71) Thus, Schlegel expressed tremendous respect for the critical, polemical side of Jacobi, while at the same time "psychoanalyzing" him as being fearful of contradiction and ambiguity,<sup>7</sup> as having maintained the duplicitous position of *not* having retreated from the philosophical path completely, and yet at the same moment having abandoned philosophy to mere belief and revelation.

According to the three critics I will consider in this paper – Ernst Behler, Manfred Frank, and Guido Naschert – there is consensus that Schlegel develops his own unique philosophical position in late 1796. Schlegel first criticizes and then decisively departs from the single, absolute, fundamental principle or *Grundsatz* of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and argues for an "alternating principle," a translation of the terms *Wechselgrundsatz* or *Wechselerweis*. On this, I am in complete

6 KFSA II, 72: "Er hätte es nicht über sich gewinnen können, offenbare Widersprüche, Fehlschlüsse und Zweideutigkeiten durch genialischen Tiefsinn in einzelnen Stellen, durch die vorteilhafteste Beleuchtung, und sogar durch Autoritäten vor seinen eigenen und fremden Augen zu verstecken..."

7 KFSA II, 72: "War es etwa Furcht, was ihn [Jacobi, RL] zurückhielt, weiter zu forschen?" This is a slight corrective to Lauth 1971.

agreement with the extant readings. To be sure, Schlegel's rejection of Fichte's *Grundsatz* is symptomatic of a more general anti-foundationalist and anti-transcendental tendency that was being articulated by a circle of students in Jena at the time. However, Schlegel's critique and his unique attempt to articulate a distinct theory set him apart from the skeptical attitude of the day. (Frank 1996a, 413–414)

While it is therefore now widely accepted that 1795–96 is the decisive moment in Schlegel's philosophical development, there is no such consensus regarding Schlegel's departure from the idea of a single, absolute, indubitable grounding principle (*Grundsatz*), as it had been expressed in Fichte's *Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794. Schlegel's turning away from the absolute principle was influenced by the skeptical position that became widely discussed in the philosophical culture around Jena at the time, a type of anti-foundationalism, some would say skepticism, that was being expressed in student circles in Jena in 1795. Ehrhard, Herbert, and Niethammer all adopted variations of this skeptical, irreverent position vis-à-vis the *Grundsucherei*, the perceived obsession with a foundational principle, and mocked all attempts to arrive at a basic and indubitable proposition that could serve as the ground for all philosophy. Much of this skepticism can be traced back to Jacobi and, according to Dieter Henrich, to the work of the Carl Immanuel Diez. (Heinrich 1991, 240–245) Schlegel read Jacobi's *Über die Lehre des Spinoza* very carefully, grasped its consequences fully, and took those consequences seriously: the *Philosophical Fragments* of 1796 (KFSA XVIII, 505–521) provide a sketch of Schlegel's philosophical work at this time, and the philosophical positions he was studying and trying to work through. Schlegel sought a fourth path, one could say, beyond the skeptical stance, Jacobi's critique of the fundamental principle, and Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. This new path Schlegel embarks upon and utilizes is the *alternating principle* (*Wechselerweis*), an oscillating or shifting mediation not merely at the level of subjectivity, but between subjects, *within* specific disciplines of knowledge, and finally *between* disciplines. What will emerge in the course of this reconstruction will provide, I hope, guideposts for an alternative reading to Schlegel's "alternating principle" and clear the way for a re-appraisal of Friedrich Schlegel's early philosophical development. Because of the centrality of the *Wechselerweis*, it might even suggest a re-assessment of early German romantic philosophy more generally.

The paper consists of four sections. In Part I, I examine Ernst Behler's important paper of 1996 on the alternating principle. Behler

traced the “alternating principle” to Schlegel’s elaboration of *Wechsel* in his early historical-poetic and philological writings, prior to the encounter with Fichte. In Part II, Manfred Frank’s reading of the *Wechselerweis* as presented in two central papers of 1996 and his collection of essays of 1997, which, taken together, constitute the most sustained engagement with this material, is considered. In Part III, the *transcendental-pragmatic* reading of Guido Naschert published in *Athenäum. Jahrbuch für Romantik* 1996 and 1997 is interrogated. And in Part IV, I discuss Schlegel’s critique of Fichte and suggest an alternative reading of Schlegel’s “alternating principle” that, in my view, more adequately captures Schlegel’s anti-transcendental, material philological-hermeneutical approach developed in 1796–1797. I first present the central passages where Schlegel essays the “alternating principle,” and then suggest a path of studying Schlegel’s theory of alternation once we have dispensed with the idealistic framework and have purged the remaining transcendental residues that have continued to inform the scholarship on this important principle since 1996–1997.

## I. The Idealism of Ernst Behler’s Reading

In the introduction to Volume VIII of the KFSa, Ernst Behler elucidated Schlegel’s early philosophical development as a reaction to Jacobi’s attack on reason. Schlegel viewed Jacobi as an enemy of reason (“Feind der Vernunft”) (Behler 1963, xxx). For Schlegel, Jacobi’s rejection of reason in his critique of Spinoza condemned him to the position of a “passive Mystic,” or a “mystical Sophist.” (KFSa I, 104; KFSa II, 26, 89) Schlegel considered Jacobi’s philosophy of belief to suffer from a lack of “criticism.” (Behler 1963, xxxii) According to Schlegel, Jacobi had abandoned the fundamental instincts of philosophy – scientific systematicity and truth – and had plunged philosophical thinking into an abyss of superstition (*Aberglauben*), excessive enthusiasm and excessive sentimentality (*Schwärmerei*). (KFSa II, 70) Jacobi’s exclusive emphasis on belief and his profound mistrust of reason could not be reconciled with philosophy, according to Schlegel; philosophy required a striving after scientific systematicity and comprehensiveness and truth. (KFSa II, 71) If Jacobi’s critique of the fundamental principle had led him to a religious, individualistic philosophy of belief based on a pure act of faith, Schlegel defended the philosophical project while rejecting the necessity of a single, abso-

lute foundational principle which had been put forward by Reinhold and Fichte.

Behler's reading of this problematics in his article "Friedrich Schlegel's Theory of an Alternating Principle prior to his arrival in Jena (6 August 1796)" (Behler 1996) offered a crucial perspective on the nature and origins of the "alternating principle." Behler identified the origin of the idea of an "alternating principle" in Schlegel's reading of and critical engagement with Jacobi's argument that the system of reason has no solid grounding and must enter into a *reductio ad infinitum*. (Behler 1996, 384–385) He underscored the significance of Schlegel's decisive meeting with Novalis in Weissenfels in late July and August 1796, where the discourse of *alternation* and *oscillation* can be gleaned from both the fragments and the subsequent letters between them.<sup>8</sup> In his work on this early phase of German romantic philosophy, Manfred Frank has mentioned Schlegel's use of the notion of alternation in his early philological writings on classical antiquity only briefly, (Frank 1997, 889) whereas Behler was very precise in locating the earliest appearance of the phrase. Behler actually showed the presence and function of "alternation" in the distinct sense of *Wechsel* in Schlegel's early philological writings. He concluded that "alternation" or "change" (*Wechsel*) was at first a *quality of the poetic*, a poetic-historical *relation* in which two conflicting or oppositional principles interact and are mediated with one another. Only later, according to this view, did it evolve into a *philosophical* principle. In the article of 1996, Behler wrote:

The instances of the text on alternation which seem to be prior to and independent of a Fichtean impact develop this term as a poetic principle, independent of philosophical speculation and transcendental philosophy. They are descriptive and point out a poetic quality to a high degree. Alternation in a work of poetry, drama, and literature, fuses two opposite elements on an equal level by combining and dissolving them. (Behler 1996, 389)

Behler explicitly cites three different meanings/usages of the notion of *alternation* in the early philological writings: 1) Schlegel's character-

---

8 See Frank 1997, 889. Frank differs from Behler on this point in that he does not place much significance on the philological origins of Schlegel's *Wechselerweis* in Schlegel's writings on classical drama. For Frank, *Wechselerweis* is a fundamentally philosophical proposition, not essentially linked to *Wechsel* as a dramatic category or as a poetic quality.



ization of the fluctuating principle present in the *drama of Sophocles*; 2) his characterization of Goethe as the modern poet who, in his writings, often activated an alternation between *conflicting or oppositional poetic modalities*, in this case between tranquility or equilibrium on the one hand and activity, fluctuation, and change on the other; 3) the alternation of the *affects of the mind* as a response to opposing aesthetic practices.<sup>9</sup> What is striking is that Behler sees, besides the *Anstoß* provided by Jacobi's *Spinoza-Book*, Schlegel's early confrontation with questions concerning philology and poetics as being in some way decisive for the development of his theory of the "alternating principle." Even more interesting for our purposes is Behler's separation of the earliest instances of alternation in Schlegel from philosophical speculation and transcendental philosophy.

This line of argument, however, stops rather abruptly in Behler's essay. As Schlegel begins to appropriate and evaluate Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, the notion of *Wechsel* shifts from being a historical-poetic argumentational figure to a method of philosophical thinking. Behler pointed to Schlegel's reception and review of Fichte's early philosophical writings for Niethammer's journal, to Fichte's presence in Schlegel's *Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie* (1795–97), parts of which were written after Schlegel had become acquainted with and began his critical assessment of Fichte's philosophy (which can be dated to August 1795), and, finally, to Schlegel's reading of Fichte's essays *Die Bestimmung des Gelehrten* (1794) and "Über die Sprachfähigkeit" of 1795. Whereas Behler had observed, correctly in my view, that "[...] there is no space in Fichte for an alternating principle, since everything evolves from one ultimate principle (*Grundsatz*)," (Behler 1996, 394–395) that "what can be ascertained [...] is how deeply the idea of alternation and oscillation is rooted in Schlegel's own discourse and that he did not need any informant to articulate it," (Behler 1996, 386) Fichte suddenly took center stage once again in Behler's reconstruction when it became a matter of identifying the primal scene of the *alternating principle* itself. Behler had uncovered the emergence not merely of the notion of *Wechsel*, but the very idea of an *alternating action* prior to and independently of Schlegel's reading of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and Fichte's other essays from 1794–95 – specifically, discovering the emergence of the idea of alternation

---

9 I am prepared to make the argument that this is based on Schlegel's encounter with Spinoza. I have suggested this in the area of interpretation in Leventhal 2007.

(*Wechsel*, not yet as *Wechselerweis*) in the *Studium-Aufsatz*, and in the characterization of Sophocles in particular. Yet the encounter with Fichte's "alternating action between freedom and nature," (Behler 1996, 395) and Schlegel's identification of "a continual alternating action" (KFSA I, 290, 301) result for Behler, in the end, from Schlegel's reading and appropriation of Fichte. Behler notes that it was most precisely in his conversations with Novalis in Weißenfels July-August 1796 concerning Fichte's philosophy that this "alternating turn" comes about. In his reading of the critical reception of Fichte in the joint Fichte-studies of the two young romantics, Behler argues that these consisted precisely "[...] of rising above the confines of Fichte's philosophy in an attempt to safeguard *the reflective and self-critical mobility of the mind* [my emphasis, RL] from any disciplinary (philosophy) and systematic (doctrine of knowledge) fixation." (Behler 1996, 398) It is precisely through this turn toward the subject, signaled by a transcendental gesture that is supposed to protect the reflective, self-critical mobility of the mind from (empirical) disciplinary and systematic intrusion, however, that Behler in my view departs from the unique, *material* character of Schlegelian alternation. In this diversion from the literary, philological-historical reading, Behler re-invokes the subjective moment as the cornerstone of alternation. Behler was correct, I believe, in reading Schlegel's basic point of departure as an attempt to rupture the confines – read the Grundsatz of "I=I" – of Fichte's project, but not in his supposition that this was an attempt to "safeguard the reflective and critical mobility of the mind."<sup>10</sup> Rather, Schlegel's opposition was designed to provoke a relational, differentiating, and interdisciplinary approach to philosophy, placing it in an alternating loop with history and philology; not to protect or defend ("safeguard") the activity of the mind, but to re-interpret the supposedly originary unity of mind as multiple and fluctuating.

In my view, Behler had the first part exactly right: Schlegel's reading of Fichte beginning in 1795 indicates an intensification of the rhetoric of interaction, oscillation, alternation, or reciprocity. Yet Schlegel had already employed the notion of alternation and oscilla-

---

10 Here, one can remark the persistence of Walter Benjamin's view of Schlegel's appropriation of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, namely in the figure of "unendliche Reflexion." However, Benjamin's point was precisely that this "unendliche reflexion" in Schlegel is displaced into the medium of the work of art itself, and not simply an infinite movement or agility of the "mind." See: Benjamin 1973. Cf. also Behler 1963, lix.

tion as a historical-poetic category. Schlegel's actual formulations of the "alternating principle" (*Wechselerweis*) beginning in 1796 were a profound departure from, and a conscious appropriation and revision of Fichte's *Wechselbestimmung* rather than an attempt to "safeguard the reflective and critical mobility of the mind" against disciplinary and systematic fixation.

Behler's historical reconstruction had the distinct advantage of having undertaken the task of philological research into the actual emergence of the notions of *alternation* and *alternating action* in Schlegel's early philological work. Nevertheless, several difficulties of Behler's reading have become apparent: 1) the semantic field of the term "alternating principle" has been expanded to include a host of other terms whose precise relation(s) to the *Wechselerweis* remain obscure. In particular, it is unclear how the polysemous notion of *Wechsel* – oscillation, change, shift – in poetic tone or quality relates to and can be read as the precursor of the alternating principle as a philosophical construct. At best, it would seem that classical drama (Sophocles) and, in modern literature, Goethe provide examples or *Beispiele* of such alternation, something Schlegel would develop. Secondly, (2) although Behler successfully drew our attention to the notion of alternation and oscillation in Schlegel's early philological writings, Schlegel's debate with Jacobi, specifically in the context of his engagement with Fichte, reemerges (in a manner quite similar to Manfred Frank) as the primal scene of the *alternating principle*. Behler did not consider other key formulations of the "alternating principle" that display a very different profile. How does the alternating principle as a reading of Fichte secure "the reflective and self-critical mobility of the mind" from any systematic, philosophical fixation when it is precisely systematic and philosophical rigor that Schlegel had insisted upon against Jacobi? More fundamentally, how does the Fichtean self-positing activity of the "I" as a *Tathandlung* reassert itself into Schlegel's critique in the rhetoric of "*the reflective and self-critical mobility of the mind*"? This reading places Schlegel squarely *back* into the framework of an idealistic philosophy of consciousness, situating "infinite reflection" in the pure activity of self-consciousness. Behler's polemic against fixation has merit. However, a distinction must be made between philosophy striving for truth and systematic totality, which Schlegel actually *upheld against* Jacobi, and, on the other hand, the reduction of philosophy to one foundational principle. The two – systematicity and foundationalism – need not be conjoined, and Schlegel consistently

advocated the necessity of the former in philosophy, even after 1797 and in the Romantic phase,<sup>11</sup> while tenaciously attacking the latter.

We might therefore already at this point conjecture that Schlegel's *Wechselerweis* is not so much concerned with the "reflective and self-critical mobility of the mind" (Behler) – which announces an adherence to the philosophy of the subject and of consciousness – as it is with the project to cut a third path beyond Jacobi's invective against reason and Fichte's insistence on one, and only one, absolute, foundational principle as the ground for all philosophy. Behler gave us the important starting-point of a genuine historical reconstruction precisely by stating the difference between Fichtean and Schlegelian alternation: Schlegel's alternation, according to Behler, "remains in the realm of finitude" (Behler 1996, 402) in contradistinction to Fichte, its origins not in search of an absolute fundamental first principle, but in the oscillation or fluctuation between different and differing theses, modalities of thought and discourse, and finally various disciplines that require each other in order to produce useful and interesting interpretive action. By bringing the discussion back into a *critical reflective capacity of mind*, however, Behler questioned his own reading that sought to dislodge Schlegel's alternating principle from the dominance of the Fichte's and Reinhold's<sup>12</sup> attempts to deduce the totality of being from a single, primary act of thetic consciousness. (Behler 1996, 399–400)

## II. The Return of the Subject in Manfred Frank's Idealistic Reading of Schlegel's Alternating Principle

The first systematic, explicit reading of the "alternating principle" (*Wechselerweis*) was carried out by Manfred Frank, first in his 1996 article "'Wechselgrundsatz': Friedrich Schlegels philosophischer Ausgangspunkt" (Frank 1996b), and then in a slightly more comprehensive way in his book, actually a collection of lectures, that had the title

---

11 Even in the *Athenäumsfragmente*, "System" is posited as a necessary point of resistance to the "Fragment," and the systematicity of the system is never simply given up or abandoned. On the importance of the system, and particularly the "system-subject," see: Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy 1986, especially 28–31.

12 K.L. Reinhold, *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens*, Prag und Jena, 1789. On Reinhold, see: Henrich 1991, 117, and Henrich 1992, 787f. On Reinhold's "Grundsatzkrise" of 1792, see: Frank 1996a, 410–413.

'*Unendliche Annäherung*': *Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik*, published in 1997.<sup>13</sup> Frank's argument states that Schlegel's reception and transformation of the critical philosophy was the single most decisive and significant break from Reinhold's and Fichte's attempt to philosophize from an originary absolute principle. In Frank's reading, in agreement with Behler, Schlegel develops the explicit "alternating principle" for the first time in a critical response to Jacobi's Spinoza-study (*Über die Lehre des Spinoza* 1785; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1789) in his review of Jacobi's *Woldemar* in 1796. (KFSA II, 72; Frank 1997, 875) Frank wrote:

Daß der höchste Grundsatz der Philosophie nur ein 'Wechselerweis' sein kann, soll hier einfach bedeuten, daß ein Begriff oder ein Satz allein nicht per se, sozusagen aus cartesianischer Evidenz, sondern erst durch einen weiteren und zweiten (vorläufig) begründet wird [...] Genau das war aber eine Grundeinsicht, die Jacobi in der 2. Auflage seines Spinoza-Buchleins formuliert hatte. (Frank 1997, 929)

On Frank's view, then, Schlegel's critique was a reiteration of the critique Jacobi had lodged against Fichte in his *Über die Lehre des Spinoza*: every concept or principle must itself be grounded through another concept or principle *ad infinitum*. But there is a key difference between Jacobi's fear of an infinite regression and Schlegel's postulate of an alternating principle that Frank elides here. We have stated that Schlegel was dissatisfied with the existent claims concerning the absolute, all of which he believed were guilty of "mysticism." Schlegel was equally skeptical, however, of the claims that denied not merely the possibility of our knowledge or experience of the absolute, but the absolute itself. At this time – the Fall of 1796 and the Winter 1796/97 – Schlegel was engaged with Fichte's philosophy, but was disconcerted with Fichte's fundamental principle. He seems to have shared Novalis' critique, as we are able to glean from a letter dated 14 June 1797: "Fichte kann nicht aus der W[issenschafts]L[ehre] heraus, wenigstens nicht ohne eine *Selbstversetzung* [my emphasis, RL], die mir unmöglich erscheint." (KFSA XXIII, 372) Schlegel's mention of a necessary *self-displacement* (*Selbstversetzung*), impossible within Fichte's system, is of decisive importance, for it reveals what was to become for him a central component of the alternating

---

<sup>13</sup> Available in English in abbreviated form as: Manfred Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, trans. Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert, Albany: SUNY Press, 2003.

principle, which cannot consist in an originary, absolute positing of identity, but rather requires the opposition and resistance of an Other – Schlegel often refers to the *Gegner* in this context – in order to function at all, a process of self-estrangement or alienation and opening of itself toward an Other which then allows it to (tentatively) posit itself as part of a *process of extrinsic relation and mediation*. Frank is in agreement with Behler that the first signs of the fundamental departure from the Fichtean *Grundsatzgedanke* were present already in Schlegel's aesthetic and classical-philological writings of 1794: "In seinen antikenwissenschaftlichen und ästhetischen Arbeiten der Jahre 1794 bis zum Frühling 1796, ja eigentlich bis Sommer 1796 hatte er [Schlegel, RL] sich ganz vorbehaltlos, ja mit Emphase auf Fichtes Gedanke einer Ableitung aus unbezweifelbarem Prinzip verlassen." (Frank 1996b, 30) For Frank, however, the parity of (finite) consciousness and the infinite, or of the individual and the totality (to be sure, as an interpretation of Spinoza's *ἐν χαί παν*) constitutes this "relative" self-identity, (Frank 1996b, 32) and precisely at this point the latent idealism of Frank's position becomes evident: "Denn das in sich abgeschlossene, das vollbestimmte Absolute wäre beides: Einheit des Einen und des Unendlichen," (Frank 1996b, 38) as if Schlegel's discourse presumed or prefigured the speculative unity of the individual and the infinite in a decidedly Hegelian fashion; as if the alternation must be speculatively completed and "comprehended" in a final unity of the finite (consciousness) and the infinite (the absolute).

Schlegel's departure from the idea of a first, fundamental principle in the Fall of 1796 has to do at the most basic level with his *critique* of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, which can be enunciated along three distinct lines: 1) the "I=I" identity must undergo a transformation, it cannot persist completely unchanged, in the act of positing the "Not-I"; the very *thetic* act of *setzen* initiates a self-displacement;<sup>14</sup> 2) there is, in addition to the "I=I", a second, and equally significant thesis or positing, namely the ethical position of the "*I ought to be*" or "*Das ich soll sein*", i.e. it cannot be pure, theoretical or speculative activity, but rather must be supplemented by practical *volitional activity*; and 3) that during and after the process of the this positing of itself and the "Not-I", the relationship of the I to itself has been shaken or altered so that the "I" that emerges after this process can

---

14 Interestingly, Paul Franks 2005, 294 has recently pointed to the non-circularity of moral law and the principle of freedom in a very similar manner to Schlegel's critique of Fichte.

no longer be the same “I” that was contained in the original *Grundsatz*. Fichte, as Schlegel states in his *Philosophische Fragmente, Zur Wissenschaftslehre* of 1796, was not “critical enough”: “Auch in der W[issenschafts]L[ehre] muss die Methode kritisch sein: das ist Fichte nicht.” (KFSA XVIII, 8, Nr. 52) Fichte’s system becomes for Schlegel itself a form of Mysticism: “Wenn F[ichte]s System ächter Mysticismus ist, so muss es sich selbst annihilieren – er weiss auch gar nichts von Gränze, Eintheilung pp. Es fliesst alles unaufhaltbar und schrankenlos in ewigem Kreislauf fort.” (KFSA XVIII, 10, Nr. 70) To place this in a more modern idiom, Fichte’s idealism unconsciously blurs historical and disciplinary boundaries, whereas Schlegel “alternating principle” demands a recognition of such boundaries prior to any productive, interesting confrontation between historical disciplines, systems, or discourses. The drawing/recognition of boundaries permeates Schlegel’s philological-hermeneutical discourse at this time. Thus, in *Zur Philologie*, Schlegel states:

Wenn ein Philologe seine Gränzen so ganzkennt wie Eichst. [Eichstädt] so muß es auch mit der philolog [philologischen] Schärfe und Genauigkeit nicht ganz richtig stehn. – Bewunderungswürdig an Wolf, wie er s. [seine] Gränzen kennt. (KFSA XVI, 41)

Was gehört zum Begriff? — *Wesen, Grund* (Deduction) Gränzen *Schranken* (diff. [differentia] specif. [specifica] (Wesen Grund und Zweck ist bey einem *prakt. [praktischen]* Begriff einerley.) *Bestandtheile*. Unterschied von  $\phi\sigma$  [Philosophie] sehr wichtig. Das ist das erste. (KFSA XVI, 45)

Die historische Kenntniß des Alterth. [Alterthums] erfordert eigentlich, daß die Kritik schon vollendet sey und die Hermeneutik/ Diese beyden Arten der Philologie sind also in Wechselwirkung. Es ist wichtig, daß die Gränzen nicht verwirrt werden, wie in der neumodigen Interpret. [Interpretazion] auch wohl in der Conjekurazion. (KFSA XVI, 38)

Schlegel’s counter-argument, according to Frank, is the *alternating principle* and the “progressive extension of the limits or boundaries of knowledge” in an infinite, ongoing “approximation” or *Annäherung*. Frank quotes Schlegel from the Fragments *Zur Logik und Philosophie*. 1796:

In meinem System ist der letzte Grund wirklich ein *Wechselerweis*. In Fichte's ein Postulat und unbedingter Satz. (KFSa XVIII, 521, Nr. 22)

Frank then proceeds to give us the provenance of the “reciprocally determining or supporting” propositions that are precisely the content of this *Wechselerweis*. For this, Frank uses a Fragment from the *Philosophische Fragmente Erste Epoche. II* from 1797–1798:

*Das Ich setzt sich selbst und das Ich soll sich setzen* sind wohl mit nichten Sätze aus einem höheren; einer ist so hoch als der andere; auch sind es zwei Grundsätze, nicht einer. Wechselgrundsatz. (KFSa XVIII, 36, Nr. 193)

There are, for Schlegel, minimally *two* propositions, neither of which is “higher” or more fundamental than the other. The point here is that Fichte's *Grundsatz* is insufficient in two ways: 1) it requires the additional proposition *das Ich soll sein*, and is therefore referred to *practical* philosophy, thus demonstrating the first lack or weakness as a purely theoretical proposition; 2) secondly, according to Frank, the Fichtean proposition *das ich soll sich setzen* (“the I must posit itself”) can and does not, for Schlegel, express the absolute that it claims to, precisely because this proposition is *bestimmt*, or determined/conditioned, insofar as it must exclude something from itself, must posit a “Not-I” over and against itself, and is therefore precisely *not self-sufficient*. Fichte, on Schlegel's reading, is compelled to posit another thetic proposition, there must be an additional thetic postulate if you will, that of opposition or *Gegenwirkung*, an *Anstoß*, a delimiting activity that cannot be derived from nor reduced to the “I” itself. (Frank 1996b, 36)

Frank's reading of Schlegel's *Wechselerweis* then undergoes an alteration itself: from the “alternating principle” of the self-positing of the “I posits itself” and the proposition “The I must posit itself,” Frank then takes us to the *Wechselbegriffe* of consciousness and infinity from the later lectures on *Transzendentalphilosophie. Jena 1800–1801*. We leave aside here the possible historical-philological objection that these passages are taken from lectures held in Jena 1800–1801, *after* Schlegel became acquainted with Schelling's transcendental philosophy (Heinrich 1992, 127; p. 127; Elsässer 1991, xxi–xxii), and after the explication of the romantic program 1798–1799. Frank summarizes: “Schlegels ‘letzter Grund’ ist also erklärtermaßen kein singulärer (Fichtescher) Grundsatz, sondern ein Konsortium zweier, ja (nach einigen Frag-



menten) *mehrerer Sätze*.” (Frank 1996b, 44) Frank hypothesizes that Schlegel received the notion from the first *Wissenschaftslehre*, where Fichte uses the concept of *Wechselbestimmung* to articulate the two activities that the absolute *Ich* engages in the process of its own coming to self-consciousness. Fichte’s early *Grundriß des Eigenthümlichen der Wissenschaftslehre* of 1795 already speaks of *Wechselwirkung*, and on several different levels: not merely the relative activity or *interaction* between the I and the Not-I, but also in the “free oscillation between several possible ways of freely determining the image” that consciousness forms. (Fichte, SW I, 131–146; 381–382) The key phrase here, a “consortium” of two or more *fundamental principles*, misses the radical discursive innovation occurring in Schlegel’s texts. In his essay of 1980, Werner Hamacher carefully argued the case of the supplemental *Zusatz* of the transcendental imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) in Fichte on which such *Wechselbestimmung* depends: namely, the imagination, which has neither “fixed borders” (*keine Feste Grenze*) (Fichte SW I, 216) nor a “fixed standpoint” (*keinen festen Standpunkt*) (Fichte, SW I, 216) and which Schlegel almost certainly took up and utilized for his own sculpting of the “alternating principle.” (Hamacher 1980, 1165) Other candidates suggest themselves: Novalis, whose *Fichte-Studien* exhibit a strong concern for and engagement with the notion of reciprocal determination. But the most likely candidate is in fact Schlegel’s reading and review of Jacobi’s *Woldemar* and his reception of Jacobi’s Spinoza-Book *Über die Lehre des Spinoza* in the journal *Deutschland*, 1796. Speaking of the contradiction and the senselessness of a *direct intuition* of the infinite absolute, Schlegel wrote about the futility of every philosophy that takes as its point of departure a single, fundamental, first principle. Recall the decisive passage from Schlegel’s review of Jacobi’s *Woldemar*:

Die zweite Widersinnigkeit trifft eigentlich jede Elementarphilosophie, welche von einer Tatsache ausgeht. – Was Jacobi dafür anführt: „das jeder Erweis schon etwas Erwiesenes voraussetze“ (Spin. S. 225); gilt nur wider diejenigen Denker, welche von einem einzigen Erweis ausgehen. Wie wenn nun aber ein von aussen unbedingt, gegenseitig aber bedingter und bedingender *Wechselerweis* der Grund der Philosophie ware? (KFSA II, 72)

Schlegel’s *Wechselerweis* can therefore be led directly back to his reading of Spinoza, through Jacobi’s critique. On this point, consider what Frank asserts concerning the impact of Schlegel’s review and critique of Jacobi. He writes:

Dass der hoechste Grundsatz der Philosophie nur ein 'Wechselerweis' sein kann, soll hier einfach bedeuten, dass ein Begriff oder ein Satz nicht *per se*, sozusagen aus cartesianischer Evidenz, sondern erst durch einen weiteren und zweiten (vorläufig) begründet wird (für den dann dasselbe gilt, so dass wir durch Kohärenzbildung der Wahrheit immer nur näherkommen, ohne sie selbst in einem einzigen Gedanken definitiv zu packen zu kriegen). Genau das war aber eine Grundeinsicht, die Jacobi in der Zweitaufgabe seines Spinoza-Buchleins formuliert hatte. (Frank 1997, 929)

Frank's epistemological reading thus frames the "alternating principle" as merely a *different type of grounding or principle*, a *relational* grounding *not* through any form of direct or immediate evidence, but through another *provisional* (*vorläufig*) proposition, which itself in turn is grounded through another, *ad infinitum*. If Frank's reading were correct, Schlegel's alternating principle would be subject to precisely the same critique as Jacobi's critique of Fichte. It would appear naïve to assume that Schlegel simply replaced Jacobi's charge of *infinite regression* with his own version of continual grounding, even if it is qualified, as Frank does, with the term "provisional." In the passage cited above, Schlegel asserts that the *Wechselerweis* is unconditional and absolute (*unbedingt*) from the *outside* – meaning here that there is no other *external* principle or ground *prior* to it – but *reciprocally determined and determining* (*gegenseitig bedingend*). It can therefore *not* be a ground or grounded, even in a preliminary or provisional fashion, through a second, further concept or principle as Frank suggests. Rather, to the extent that one must speak of alternation not as a "principle" but as a *process*, it must itself be unconditional – strictly in the sense as not being caused by a *prior principle or ground external to it* – and it must also be unconditionally, i.e. absolutely inflected in its very core by the difference, resistance, or the opposition of the Other or *Gegner* as Schlegel figures it.

Summing up Frank's suggestive reading, we can say the following: first, Schlegel's *Wechselerweis* or *Wechselgrundsatz* is understood as his (Schlegel's) attempt to provide an alternating, reciprocating, oscillating movement between two principles that interact in an as yet indeterminate manner that ensures and guarantees the infinite progression and endless striving for truth that Frank believes to be Schlegel's ultimate object. On this view, Schlegel's "alternating principle" becomes a "progressive[r] Reflexionserweis." (Frank 1997, 933) Secondly, this notion of alternation or oscillation was already present in Schlegel's self-proclaimed debut on the philosophical stage, his review of the

first four volumes of F.I. Niethammer's *Philosophisches Journal* of 1795. There, Schlegel wrote of *oscillation*: "Zwar müssen alle übrigen Wissenschaften *oszillieren*, so lange es an einer positiven Philosophie fehlt. Indessen gibt es in ihnen doch wenigstens etwas relativ Festes und Allgemeingeltendes. In der Philosophie ist nichts ausgemacht, wie der Augenschein lehrt. Es fehlt hier noch aller Grund und Boden." (KFSÄ VIII, 30) Third, Frank then uses this reading to support his claim that Schlegel held a coherence-theory of truth in which truth is approached or approximated progressively as increasing corroborative evidence and coherence among various positions is achieved. Finally, fourth, in providing the actual *content* of the *Wechselerweis*, Frank does not use fragments from the period of 1796–97, but rather fast-forwards to later fragments – for example the fragments contained in *Geist der Fichtischen Wissenschaftslehre*. <1797–1798> and to the lectures on transcendental philosophy – *Transzendentalphilosophie* – that Schlegel delivered in Jena 1800–1801.

Two interpretive hypotheses suggest themselves in light of Frank's genealogy: first, that Schlegel develops the "alternating principle" over time, that *Wechselerweis* experiences and responds to change as Schlegel reads the other post-Kantian idealisms of the period 1795–98 (above all, Schelling); or, second, that alternation itself alternates or shifts according to the specific application or project at hand, that is, in response to the material-philological challenges Schlegel faced in these decisive years – most notably, the *justification of modernity* (in *Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie* [1795–1797]); the critique and historicization of Kantian aesthetics; the articulation of a hermeneutic philology, a "philosophy of philology," in the notebooks *Zur Philologie* (1797); and the nascent glimpses of a theory of romantic poetry as a "progressive Universalpoesie" in *Athenäumsfragment* 116 (1798). In either case, based on the evidence we have considered, it seems insufficient to incorporate or subsume Schlegel's "alternating principle" within the transcendental-philosophical paradigm.

Frank's interpretation of the "alternating principle" evidences a clear commitment to idealistic philosophy and to the philosophy of the subject, and this needs to be made explicit. To conceive of the "alternating principle" as a "consortium" of two or more principles envelops alternation within a *speculative* architecture, here instanced in the epistemological approximation (*Annäherung*) of truth. This is certainly one plausible way of reading the *Wechselerweis*. However, such a reading forecloses the possibility of exploring where Schlegel truly departs from the idealistic framework and begins to articulate

the rudiments of what I would refer to as a *material hermeneutics*. Relative, tentative, or preliminary (Frank uses the term *vorläufig*) self-identity locates the process of alternation on a progressive, speculative continuum. To do justice to Frank's strong reading, he *does* indicate the opening or aperture toward such an alternative reading in his article "Alle Wahrheit ist relativ, Alles wissen symbolisch". (Frank 1996a) There, he states: "Es wird also, wie Schlegel sagt, 'ein absolutes Verstehen [...] geleugnet in der Philosophie, die eine absolute Wahrheit leugnet'" (KFSA XII, 102, Nr. 257). Von hier öffnen sich mannigfache Wege in eine Hermeneutik der Endlichkeit, die ich hier nicht werde beschreiben können." (Frank 1996a, 431) Frank never followed-up on this highly promising and suggestive thesis of a *hermeneutics of finitude*, in my view so at odds with his own reading, nor does he mention the other decisive passage of Schlegel's concerning precisely this issue on the same page: "Ein absolutes Verstehen ist nach unserer Absicht gar nicht möglich. Es schreibt sich dies aus dem Dogmatismus her." (KFSA XII, 102, Nr. 254) If indeed no absolute understanding is possible on Schlegel's view, then it follows that there can be no absolute truth, even in the speculative sense, either. Rather than trying to encompass this proposition in a speculative fashion at a higher level of philosophical reflection, Schlegel's imperative states that philosophy itself must be complemented by and through other disciplines, namely history and philology, through which and in relation to which alone it can then understand itself as "relative" and truly "historical." On Frank's view, Schlegel's "alternating principle" remains for him a subject of *pure theoretical philosophy*, uninflected by the difficulty and contingency of interpretation and communication that beset such a hermeneutics of finitude or material philology. As a replacement or "proxy" for the first, absolute principle, the *Wechselerweis* in Frank's reading gains him the infinite progressivity of knowledge and the coherence theory of truth, but at the cost of the practical hermeneutic dimensions of interpretive resistance and incomprehensibility central to Schlegel's project. It is telling that Frank's reading of the content of the *Wechselerweis* relies on a quote that posits a clear *duality* in reciprocal, equal oscillation/alternation, parity of opposing, thetic principles, and that this strict economy resides solely at the level of subjectivity: "*Das Ich setzt sich selbst und das Ich soll sich setzen.*" While Frank develops his thesis concerning Schlegel's *Wechselerweis* as the direct antipode to Fichte, it is remarkable the degree to which Frank's own reading of the alternating principle *mirrors* Fichte's argumentation concerning *Wechselwirkung* and *Wechselbestimmung*

in the *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794: both situate alternation within the theoretical sphere of subjectivity and the philosophy of the subject. (Fichte SW I, 130–131, 140–141, 153) Frank's reading therefore fixes the alternating process within the immanent domain of the subject, and thereby bypasses or circumvents Schlegel's quite pronounced proliferation or multiplication of *Wechselerweise*, one could say its self-displacement (*Selbstversetzung*), on at least two additional levels: what we might refer to as the *disciplinary* level and secondly, within the area of practical philosophy, at the *moral-political* level. The latter is the focus of Guido Naschert's reading of Schlegel's "alternating principle."

### III. Naschert's Transcendental-Pragmatic Reading of Schlegel's *Wechselerweis*

Guido Naschert has extended the scholarship concerning Schlegel's "alternating principle" in a series of articles that appeared in *Athenäum. Jahrbuch für Romantik* in 1996–1997. Similar to Behler and Frank, Schlegel's confrontation with Jacobi's Spinoza book and Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* in 1796 play central roles in Naschert's reading of the "alternating principle," yet Naschert takes the conflict, indeed, the apparent chasm between philosophy and history as his point of departure. Schlegel's critique of Fichte is, quite simply, that Fichte denies history, and even the *Wissenschaftslehre* requires, on Schlegel's view, *historical material* and *historical spirit* from the very outset.<sup>15</sup> Naschert also sees the "alternating principle" as a stark contrast and alternative to the Fichtean model of a philosophy from a first principle. (Naschert 1996, 48) Naschert argues that Schlegel's *Wechselerweis* emerges out of an immanent critique of Fichte's system and seeks to show "...wie dies zu einer neuen Konzeption von Transzendentalphilosophie geführt hat, deren wichtigste Rechtfertigungsstrategie transzendentalpragmatischer Natur ist." (Naschert 1996, 49) Naschert's reading differs decidedly from Frank's in that

---

15 Schlegel writes that Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* cannot do without "historischen Geist und historischen Stoff [...] gleich beim ersten Schritt." KFSA XVIII, 520, 20. Naschert 1996, 81 reads Schlegel as the first German philosopher for whom the problem of the historical progression of the system is a real problem, thus anticipating Hegel: "das prinzipielle Problem einer sich für den geschichtlichen Fortschritt offenhaltenden Systembildung."

Naschert emphasizes the *practical* aspect of the “alternating principle,” its emergence as an *ethical* resolution of the dichotomy of freedom and nature, over and against Frank’s more purely *theoretical* view. Let us examine how Naschert’s transcendental-pragmatic argument concerning Schlegel’s “alternating principle” runs in detail.

Naschert begins by laying bare the “Hegelian” prejudice underlying much of Schlegel scholarship and interpretation, ranging from Hegel himself to Benjamin to Winfried Menninghaus, (Menninghaus 1987, 57) that Schlegel essentially realized and developed further Fichte’s philosophy in the arena of aesthetics. In addition, like Behler and Frank, Naschert identifies 1796 and Schlegel’s arrival in Jena as the decisive turning point, his disillusionment with Fichte’s philosophy, and at the same time his reading of Fichte’s *Naturrecht* (1796) and the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* (1796), with their increased emphasis on the intersubjective and open concept of the “I” in opposition to the purely subjective and “enclosed” concept in the earlier versions of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. (Naschert 1996, 54–56) Naschert adduces three important pieces of evidence to support his claim: first, in Schlegel’s discussion of Niethammer’s *Philosophisches Journal* in the *Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung* of 21–22 March, 1797;<sup>16</sup> secondly, in Schlegel’s critique of Jacobi’s *Woldemar*, in which the complete lack of a reciprocal relation with Allwine, and the isolative egoism and self-obsession of Woldemar leads Schlegel to conclude the absence of *Wechselbegeisterung* or “reciprocal enthusiasm.” (KFSA II, 63; Lauth 1971, 165–197) This relationality within the practical sphere – that of volition, of moral obligation, and of right – Naschert interprets as a “transcendental-pragmatic turn” (*transzendentalpragmatische Wende*) in Schlegel’s writing. (Naschert 1996, 56) What is this transcendental-pragmatic turn? Wherein does it consist, precisely, and how does it function according to Naschert?

In Naschert’s view, Schlegel’s critique of Jacobi in his review of *Woldemar* centers on what Schlegel refers to as the essential moments of philosophical engagement – truth and scientificity<sup>17</sup> – both of which he finds totally absent in Jacobi’s philosophy. These are, for

16 Naschert 1996, 56: “dass es sich beim Wechselgrund um einen notwendigen Widerstreit im Selbstverhältnis handelt, der sich mit den Begriffen des Wollens, Sollens, und Könnens formulieren lässt.”

17 KFSA II, 71: “Aber nur wenn Streben nach Wahrheit und Wissenschaft die Seele dieses Lebens ist, kann der Geist desselben philosophisch genannt werden.”

Schlegel, according to Naschert, “constitutional laws of philosophy,”<sup>18</sup> constitutional “rules of philosophy” (Naschert 1996, 63–64) which are necessarily implied in every action. The reflection upon such implicature and constitutive laws of action to which we subject ourselves in each and every individual action creates, in Naschert’s view, the “transcendental-pragmatic” argumentational strategy that Schlegel employs against his opponent Jacobi. Here, it is important to note that Naschert does not confine such reflection on the constitutive laws to self-consciousness, but rather views these as binding universal conditions of philosophizing. In a word, against Jacobi’s infinite regression, Schlegel posits a relational, even circular process of positing – *Wechselerweis*. More precisely, Schlegel *displaces* the unconditional, foundational principle into a reciprocating, oscillating structure which can be identified as the act of philosophy itself. (Naschert 1996, 62) This represents nothing short of a transformation of the Fichtean *Tathandlung* into a practical-ethical *decision*, a pragmatic, thetic positioning that is, from the very start, a fully relational, alternating principle, one which dispenses with the idea of an “unconditional beginning” and the pure immediacy of the Fichtean intuition. (Naschert 1996, 67)

Fichte’s point of departure, the “intellectual intuition,” is therefore for Schlegel incomplete, mystical, and egotistical, at odds with Fichte’s own demand of an absolute science that would encompass *all of reality*. Naschert then traces Schlegel’s reception of Fichte’s *Grundlagen des Naturrechts* of 1795, where Fichte emphasizes that the return of the “I” into itself introduces a displacement that necessarily leads to the problem of *intersubjectivity*. For Fichte, the very idea of justice in the *Naturrecht* presupposes other subjectivities, other acting subjects that interact and relate, limiting the (original) subject and self-limiting through the relation with the original subject. Fichte’s “answer” to the problem of intersubjectivity is therefore “reciprocal relation” (*Wechselwirkung*): “Nur freie Wechselwirkung durch Begriffe und nach Begriffen, nur Geben und Empfangen von Erkenntnissen, ist der eigenthümliche Charakter der Menschheit.” (Fichte SW III, 40) This response was inadequate, on Schlegel’s view, as it located the reciprocity and relationality solely in the sphere of *concepts*, in the “reciprocal relation of concepts and according to concepts,” in the “giving and receiving of knowledges,” in a word: as a purely speculative and theo-

---

18 KFSa II, 71: “[...] die konstitutionellen Gesetze, denen sich jeder Denker durch die Tat (wie der Bürger durch den Eintritt in den Staat) unterwirft und unterwerfen muß.”

retical function. For Naschert, the fundamental difficulty of Fichte's framing of reciprocity was for Schlegel the historical progression of actual open-ended applicability (*Anwendbarkeit*) and communicability (*Mittelbarkeit*), (KFSA XVIII, 520, 21; Naschert 1996, 77) – regulative functions missing in Fichte's notion of *Wechselwirkung*. It is all the more surprising that Naschert concludes by reincorporating Schlegel's "alternating principle" into a transcendental philosophy of consciousness that erases Schlegel's insistence on the material process of application and the resistances and displacements of communicativity when he states: "Der Wechselweis scheint daher ein unbedingtes Verhältnis zwischen einem bedingten Sollen und einem bedingten Wollen zu begründen [...] das als Grundstruktur des Bewußtseins anzunehmen ist." (Naschert 1996, 83) By relocating this relationality in the realm of mind and subjectivity – as a "fundamental structure of consciousness" as he puts it – Naschert in my view himself returns, perhaps unwittingly, to the "Hegelian" prejudice of Friedrich Schlegel scholarship which he traced and criticized at the outset of his essay. Given this interpretation of Schlegel's "alternating principle," it is easy to understand how Naschert sees a "transcendental-pragmatic turn," (Naschert 1996, 56) a "transcendental-pragmatic strategy of justification," (Naschert 1996, 49) a single, unifying pattern of explanation ("ein einheitliches Erklärungsmuster"), (Naschert 1997, 34) a single, unitary center of argumentation ("ein einheitliches Zentrum der Argumentationsbewegung") (Naschert 1997, 34) in Schlegel's attempt to overcome Fichte's project to ground philosophy in the originary activity of the "I," or even the reciprocally oscillating relation between the I and the Other, as Fichte did in his *Grundlage des Naturrechts* of 1796. Naschert's decisive contribution was to shift the emphasis from the *theoretical* to the *practical* domain; and yet his reading seems to be haunted by a Kantian hermeneutic that subsumes the multiplicity and dispersion of alternation under a single, unifying, transcendental principle or set of principles.

In the second installment of this extended essay, Naschert comes extremely close to a self-critique that would enable us to separate Schlegel's "alternating principle" from its transcendental-idealistic characterization as a fundamental structure of consciousness. In this second piece, Naschert writes of a "de-transcendentalization" of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* that points in a *psychological* and *hermeneutical* direction ("die in eine psychologische und interpretation-philosophische Richtung weist.") (Naschert 1997, 31) In my view, Naschert has this part exactly right. This reading also dovetails nicely



with Frank's slight indication towards a "hermeneutics of finitude" discussed previously. (Frank 1996a, 431) The question is: how does one reconcile the anti-transcendental, historical gesture Schlegel introduces with respect to Fichte's philosophy with Naschert's claim of a fundamental transcendental-pragmatic turn, Schlegel's attempt, in Naschert's words, "die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit menschlichen Wissens ohne letzte Fundamente zu bedenken"? (Naschert 1997, 31) This would seem paradoxical at the very least, considering that any attempt to formulate "necessary conditions of human knowledge" seems to entail a form of ahistorical foundationalism. (Rorty 1979) Naschert fully recognizes the alternation between logic and history present in Schlegel's polemic against Fichte, and Schlegel's insertion of communicability as a relational principle. However, he resolutely locates these important elements of Schlegel's critique in the most fundamental alternation between objectivity, subjectivity and intersubjectivity. (Naschert 1997, 13) As Naschert writes:

[...] die Antinomie des praktischen Selbstverhältnisses und das mit ihr in Zusammenhang stehende Modell einer Wechselbestimmung zwischen praktischem und empirischem Ich als Deutung des 'Wechselgrundes' und 'Wechselerweises' ein einheitliches Erklärungsmuster anzubieten [...] (Naschert 1997, 34)

One wonders whether Naschert's desire to provide such a unifying explanation for Schlegel's disparate and diverse expressions of the "alternating principle" did not itself lead to his conclusion of a transcendental-pragmatic justification as a fundamental structure of consciousness; whether in fact the reading of the "alternating principle" under the interpretive aegis of transcendental pragmatics results from the frustratingly multiple, even disparate determinations of alternation, or Schlegel's alternating interpretive movements themselves. On this view, Naschert's interpretation would represent itself a type of Kantian hermeneutic, an attempt to *subsume* the heterogeneity, multiplicity, and disparities of Schlegel's writing under a unifying principle. Yet Naschert's excellent essays in fact wonderfully display the subliminal tension between, on the one hand, the *transcendental* and, on the other, the *contingent and material tendencies* of Schlegel's writing that mirrors Schlegel's own ambivalence with regard to philosophy as a fundamental science or *Grundwissenschaft*. However, instead of *maintaining* that ambivalence and upholding the tension between these two conflicting modalities and claims, Naschert in my view succumbs to the transcendental resolution by transforming alternation into a

quasi-transcendental-practical principle that constitutes an absolute, unconditional and indubitable condition for human action. In this way, the essays violate Schlegel's "alternating principles," which in my view seek to *preserve* and even *heighten* the tension between philosophy and philology, logic and history, theory and interpretation. Schlegel's alternations attenuate this opposition or tension precisely by thematizing the *oscillating and fluctuating movement itself* over and against the finality and fixity of "absolute conditions" and the flight into foundational structures of consciousness.

For Naschert, Schlegel does not and cannot escape the transcendental scheme of argumentation and the attempt at a philosophical grounding (*Grundlegung*), even if this *Grund* defies the absolute first principle of the Fichtean postulate: "Das Ringen nach einer philosophischen Grundlegung gilt daher zugleich der Auswirkung einer neuen philosophischen Kunstsprache, die den transzendentalen Bedingungen von Welt, Bewußtsein und Gemeinschaft angemessen ist." (Naschert 1997, 15) Schlegel's language/rhetoric becomes the project of an "Ausarbeitung einer transzendentalphilosophische Kunstprosa," (15) and the imperative to reciprocally communicate oneself communicating becomes a "transzendente Einsicht in die Unhintergebarkeit des Symphilosophierens selbst," (30) so that what was essentially a rhetorical, performative action in Schlegel's fragments becomes a *constative* "insight," a transcendental statement of the "conditions of possibility" in the Kantian sense. Yet the incisive point was, as Schlegel stated it, referring to the transcendental strategy, much more a matter of *construction* than *deduction*: "Construction ist weit mehr als Deduktion." (KFSa XVIII, 36, Nr. 185) If one is going to *postulate* science, "und sucht nur die Bedingung ihrer Möglichkeit, so geräth man in den Mysticism und d.[ie] konsequenteste von diesem Standpunkt einzig mögliche Auflösung d.[er] Aufgabe ist – *das Setzen eines absoluten Ich* – wodurch Form und Inhalt d.[er] absoluten Wissenschafts[lehre] zugleich gegeben wird." (KFSa XVIII, 7, Nr. 32) In other words, if you are going to play the transcendental deduction game, the Fichtean resolution, with its deduction of the absolute original positing of the "I", is, according to Schlegel, the most consistent, indeed, the most coherent way to play. But Schlegel's critical point is that the very idea of the transcendental deduction is insufficient, ahistorical, and severely limited with regard to both the scope and depth of philosophy. The decisive issue here is that Schlegel does not, as Naschert avers, place the reciprocal determination between practical and empirical "I" as a single, indivisible act, "dessen Ex-

plikation als ‘Wechselerweis’ die Grundlehre fundiert.”(Naschert 1997, 26) Rather, Schlegel deliberately places this “one indivisible act” in a *field or network* of opposing, even potentially inimical acts or the counter-moves of the Other or “opponent” (*Gegner*), whose resistance and delimitation is required for the actual alternating relation between the practical and the empirical, finite subject. In other words, not from *within* the subject, not from the *immanent* sphere of consciousness, but rather through a radical exteriority, that is, from *without*, through actual, material “wechsseitiges Widerstreiten,” (Naschert 1997, 16) the real concrete alternation or oscillation with and through the Other – as other person, disciplines, or historical difference – indicates an irresolvable tension between “pure” (transcendental) philosophy, hermeneutics (as the “alternation” between grammar, criticism, and interpretation), and rhetoric, which in this case might be understood as the practical thetic positioning or performative entwined within the alternating principles. Returning, then, to Schlegel’s insistence on “[...] die konstitutionellen Gesetze, denen sich jeder Denker durch die Tat (wie der Bürger durch den Eintritt in den Staat) unterwirft und unterwerfen muß [...]” (KFSa II, 71) in his critique of Jacobi’s *Woldemar*, the paradoxical situation arises within which such “constitutive laws” can only be constituted as such precisely through a *series of alternations*, for example between the philosopher’s striving for truth and the limits of reason, or the individual will and the laws of the state.

#### IV. Schlegel’s Critique of Fichte and the Material<sup>19</sup> Hermeneutical-Philological Reading of Schlegel’s *Alternating Principles*

“Gewaltig insistirt auf MATERIALE Philologie.”  
(KFSa XVI 54, 222)<sup>20</sup>

1795–97 was a period of intense philosophical and philological study for Schlegel, working on and through a number of significant herme-

19 I use the term “material hermeneutics” in the sense in which it was used by Peter Szondi to oppose the notion of philosophical hermeneutics. See Szondi 1975, especially p. 404. On Szondi’s conception of a “material hermeneutics,” see: Altenhofer 1979, 165–211, Bollack 1990, 370–390, and Rastier 1998, 1902–1915.

20 On Schlegel’s project of a material hermeneutics, see his notebooks *Zur Philologie I und II* in KFSa XVI: KFSa XVI 42, #94 and #95; 45, #131; 60–61.

neutic-philological, philosophical and literary-aesthetic issues, many of which have been thoughtfully examined by existing scholarship in this area:<sup>21</sup> the relationship between the three aspects or components of philology; the process of *Anwendung* no longer considered as the traditional *applicatio*, but as a complex reflective process of appropriation, reception, and integration; the hermeneutic effects or consequences of a distinct structure of modernity, a culture which, for Schlegel, revolves around and is obsessed with *subjectivity* and that which is *interesting*;<sup>22</sup> and finally, the precarious hermeneutic situation of ongoing, cyclical reading and study continually folding back on itself and examining its own preconditions. In my view, it is impossible that these difficulties or problems do not play equally in the *entire discourse* of alternation and oscillation, in the *statements* regarding an alternating principle emerging at this time. To set them apart can only be the result of a *disciplinary or philosophical bias*. The entire thrust of Schlegel's proposed *Philosophy of Philology* was precisely to problematize and break down the sharp disciplinary boundaries separating philosophy and philology, philosophy and history, critique and interpretation, logic and history, rhetoric and philosophy, and to forge a new articulation of the manifold relations between these disciplines.<sup>23</sup>

In the following, my aim is not to present a complete reading of Schlegel's "alternating principles," but merely to gesture toward the form such a reading might take once we have extended the horizon of interpretation beyond a transcendental argument. Such an argument identifies and places the *Wechselerweis* within a "fundamental structure of consciousness" (Naschert), or "the reflective and self-critical mobility of the mind." (Behler) It is a matter of the structure and function of the *Wechselerweis*, what role it assumes in Schlegel's early

---

21 See, above all, Dierkes 1980; Michel 1982; Schläffer 1990; Zovko 1990; Behler 1992; Leventhal 1994 and Beiser 2003.

22 KFSa I, 208: "Sie [die moderne Poesie, RL] macht nicht einmal Ansprüche auf Objektivität, welches doch die erste Bedingung des reinen und unbedingten ästhetischen Werts ist, und ihr Ideal ist das Interessante, d.h. subjective ästhetische Kraft." See also: Ostermann, 197–215.

23 On the rhetoric of relationality and the relationality of rhetoric, see Schnyder 1999, whose argument aims at precisely the placing-into-relation of poetics and rhetoric, and rhetoric and philosophy as the central rhetorical process of romantic poetry. The rhetoric of "In-Berührung-setzen" articulated by Schnyder actually corresponds to my reading of *Wechselerweis* at a number of points, and Schnyder does not fall prey to the idealistic-transcendental temptation.

philosophy, once we have dispensed with the idealist interpretation that reduces and subjugates alternation to the immanence of the subject, the closure of unity and identity, and a coherence theory of truth, even if such a theory is suggested in terms of an ongoing, progressive approximation (*Annäherung*) (Frank). In the reading I will offer, oscillation or fluctuation at the level of consciousness, at the level of *mind* or the *subject*, is merely one, and in fact very limited form of alternation, one which itself exists in alternation with practical (ethical, moral, political), aesthetic, and historical correctives or resistances that in turn fuel the conversations between disciplines of the type that Schlegel sought to incite.

Schlegel's critique of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* began almost immediately after his arrival in Jena in August of 1796. In a letter to Körner of 9 August 1796, Schlegel stated his dismay of Fichte's response to a query of the place of history in his system, and was already acutely aware of the ahistorical, indeed anti-historical tendency of Fichte's philosophy. (KFSA XXIII, 333) The critique of Fichte's anti-historical attitude remained determinant for Schlegel's entire reception of Fichtean philosophy. Fichte's system remains precisely only a "tendency" without actually being carried out, according to Schlegel, due to the absence or lack of a sense of history. For Schlegel, Fichte's system is the true transcendental philosophy, but not yet the *absolute* or *systematic* philosophy in that it has not yet comprehended history, it has not historicized itself, historicized its own thetic postulate. Philosophy can only become truly systematic and absolute, according to Schlegel's critique, as it historicizes itself and criticizes its own historical emergence and development: "Sobald die φσ [Philosophie] Wiss[enschaft] wird, giebts Hist[orie]. Alles συστ[System(atische)] ist Hist[orisch]..." (KFSA XVIII, 85, Nr. 671) A true philosophical system has more in common, Schlegel wrote, with a poetical and historical system than with a mathematical one. Schlegel's first significant departure from Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* is therefore the historicization of philosophy, the appropriation of history for philosophy and the interference of the historical in and for the system of philosophy.<sup>24</sup>

The second aspect of Schlegel's critique of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* centers on the issue of communicability (*Mittelbarkeit*), a fun-

---

24 Here, Schlegel draws on and extends the eighteenth century tradition of the history of philosophy that has been documented in Israel 2006, 471–495.

damental concept that Schlegel appropriates and transforms from Kant's *Critique of Judgment*.<sup>25</sup> The famous fragment from the *Geist der Fichteschen Wissenschaftslehre 1797–1798* reads: “F.[ichte] sagt d[en] Leuten immer Bücherlang, daß er eigentlich nicht mit ihnen reden wolle noch könne.” (KFSA XVIII, 37, Nr. 200) The mysticism of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* resides precisely in its absolute positing as a pure action that remains incommunicable to the extent that every expression must always presuppose it, and that therefore no expression can adequately grasp it. Thus, Schlegel writes in the supplements to the *Philosophische Fragmente* of 1796: “Der konsequente Mystiker muß die Mitteilbarkeit ALLES Wissens nicht bloß dahin gestellt seyn lassen: sondern geradezu läugnen. Der Eklektiker muß sie behaupten, wenn er gegen den Mystiker einigen Schein von Recht haben will <und wenn s[ein] Kriterium philosophische Gültigkeit haben soll.>” (KFSA XVIII, 517, Nr. 4) Philosophical activity and communicability, not in the sense of *thetic stating*, but rather in the sense of actually *sharing in a material with someone*,<sup>26</sup> go hand in hand according to Schlegel; if you can't communicate it, it isn't philosophy. Fichte's system remains occult and inaccessible insofar as the original *thetic* positing remains outside of all actual and possible expression according to Schlegel. The fundamental proposition, Fichte advises the reader repeatedly in the *Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794, is an action that must be performed, and ultimately grasped *by each individual* in the sense of an originary, immediate insight. (Henrich 1982, 15–52) The discursive *representations* of the basic *Grundsatz* I=I are not identical to the primordial, originary insight into this fundamental identity. Fichte's “incomprehensibility” is the inability to discursively communicate the absolute positing that underlies and makes possible all other (discursive) determinations. The paradox might be formulated thus: Fichte's *Grundsatz* – the original self-positing of the “I”, the primordial *Tathandlung* as the condition of the possibility of all positing – is nevertheless *stated*, discursively articulated as a proposition and as the cornerstone of Fichte's system in the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

Before mapping the connection of this critique to Schlegel's formulation of the “alternating principle,” a review of the textual basis for the “alternating principle” as it emerges in the period between 1795

25 Following the lead of Graubner 1977, 53–75, I analyzed this in relation to F. Schlegel in my *Disciplines of Interpretation* (1994), 262–264, 279.

26 KFSA II, 158: “[...] man muß es wirklich mitteilen, mit ihm *teilen können*, nicht bloß sich äussern, allein [...]”

and 1797 would be useful. We have referred above to Schlegel's review of Jacobi where *Wechselerweis* appears for the first time. (KFSA II, 72) In the *Philosophische Fragmente. Erste Epoche. Zur Wissenschaftslehre* of 1796, Schlegel noted: "Die  $\phi$  [Philosophie] <im eigentlichen Sinne> hat weder einen Grundsatz noch einen Gegenstand, noch eine bestimmte Aufgabe. Die Wissenschaftslehre hat eine bestimmte Aufgabe (Ich und NichtIch und deren Verhaeltnis) einen bestimmten Wechselgrund und also auch eine bestimmte Aufgabe." (KFSA XVIII, 7, Nr. 36) In the fragments under the title *Der Geist der Wissenschaftslehre* 1797–1798, Schlegel wrote: "Das Ich setzt sich selbst und das Ich soll sich setzen sind wohl mit nichten abgeleitete Saetze aus einem höheren; einer ist so hoch als der andere; auch sind es zwei Grundsätze, nicht einer. *Wechselgrundsatz*." (KFSA XVIII, 36, Nr. 193) Most importantly for our purposes, consider the following longer passages from the *Philosophische Fragmente* of 1796, which I quote in full so as to preserve the scriptural context within which Schlegel enunciates the term "alternating principles":

Wenn ich mich in diesen Blättern so oft auf die *Bestätigung der Erfahrung* berufe: so räsonnire ich nicht bloß *philosophisch*, sondern *logisch*. Die Logik und Historie sind abgeleitete Wissenschaften eines Stammes. Zwischen ihnen findet also *Bestätigung – Wechselerweis* statt. Sie dürfen Lehrsätze von einander borgen. – Bestimmung aller Wissenschaften, wo dieß erlaubt ist. – In der Wissenschaftslehre giebt es EINEN *Wechselerweis*, weil das Ganze ein in sich vollendeter Kreislauf ist; in den abgeleiteten Wissenschaften *Vielheit* der Wechselerweise; und im System *Allheit* der Wechselerweise. (KFSA XVIII, 505, Nr. 2)

The *logical* implicature of alternation entails that the two moments of philosophy – logic and history – confirm (*bestätigen*) each other; as Schlegel contends, they may even borrow (*borgen*) their propositions or theorems from each other. Such an alternating determination or confirmation occurs in the *singular* at the level of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, as a multiplicity in the sub-disciplines, and, in a speculative sense (which Schlegel does not elucidate), as the *totality of all alternating principles* (of the subject itself, at the level of intersubjectivity, within disciplines and among sub-disciplines, and then between the sciences themselves).

Es muß der Philosophie nicht bloß ein Wechselbeweis, sondern auch ein *Wechselbegriff* zum Grunde liegen. Man kann bei jedem Begriff

wie bei jedem Erweis wieder nach einem Begriff und Erweis desselben fragen. Daher muß die Philosophie wie das epische Gedicht in der Mitte anfangen, und es ist unmöglich dieselbe so vorzutragen und Stück fuer Stück hinzuzählen, dass gleich das Erste für sich vollkommen begründet und erklärt waere. (KFSA XVIII, 518, Nr. 16)

Circumventing Jacobi's critique, Schlegel avoids the infinite regression by placing the alternation itself in the middle, the mid-point or *Indifferenzpunkt* between two or more propositions whose singularity and identity, *qua* individual propositions, cannot be understood as grounded or explained in and of themselves, but only in their alternating mediation with the Other.

Nicht das Gebot: *Wissenschaft soll sein* – kann der Philosophie zum Grunde gelegt werden. Denn diese kann nur synthetisch aus dem: *das Ich soll seyn* – abgeleitet und also von dem Gegner in Anspruch genommen werden; nicht analytisch, aus dem was er nothwendig durch die That zugiebt, entwickelt werden. – Dies schlechthin ohne Ruecksicht auf den Gegner postuliren und den Gegner nicht widerlegen, sondern ihm nur beweisen, dass er ein Sophist sey – ist noch nicht hinreichend. Es ist dann gewiss daß der Gegner Unrecht habe, aber nicht, daß der Philosoph Recht habe. In meinem System ist der letzte Grund wirklich ein *Wechselerweis*. (KFSA XVIII, 521, Nr. 22)

The “final ground” – one cannot fail to sense Schlegel's nascent irony here – can only be alternation itself in its *alternating alternation*, i.e. not as *Grund* in the sense of a fundamental principle, proposition, or *Grundsatz*, but as the infinite relationality and oscillation that is enacted and determined in alternation itself.

If we examine the fragments directly pertaining to the “alternating principle,” it is immediately striking that there is an *array* of various discursive formulations of the alternating process: *Wechselerweis*, *Wechselgrund*, *Wechselbegriff*, *Wechselbeweis* to mention just a few iterations of the “alternating principle.” The iterative proliferation of alternating designations enacts on a discursive plane the alternating movement or oscillation of alternation itself, and begins to question the singularity and integrity of the phrase “alternating principle” itself. Specifically, in *Beilage* to the *Philosophical Fragmente* of 1796 quoted above (KFSA XVIII, 505, Nr. 2), Schlegel speaks directly to the different levels of *Wechselerweise* (plural) and to the multiplicity of different alternating principles in the various “derivative” or indi-



vidual sciences. Should we not take Schlegel to mean that there is not one, but infinitely many alternating *principles*? Would not actual alternation require such continuous and multiple alternation, not merely at the immanent level of subjectivity but also between the disciplines – philosophy and philology, logic and history – as well as between the sub-disciplines of these disciplines – criticism and hermeneutics in the case of “philology”, for instance? Schlegel seems to suggest exactly that when he states, in *Zur Philologie*:

Diese beyden Arten der Philologie [Kritik und Hermeneutik, R.L.] sind also in Wechselwirkung. (KFSa XVI, 38, Nr. 44)

My first thesis would therefore be: the idealistic readings we have considered thus far all have in common that they fix “alternation” within the immanent sphere of subjectivity, whereas Schlegel’s alternation seems to suggest *simultaneous, multiple alternations* not merely *within* the subject, but *between* subjects, and not merely *within* specific disciplines (philosophy, history, philology), but *between* those disciplines as well – philosophy, history, literature, rhetoric, hermeneutics, and philology.<sup>27</sup> Schlegel’s *Versuch über den Republikanismus* (*Essay on Republicanism*), for example, which emerges at exactly the time he is formulating the *Wechselerweis*, even suggests a third term for the *political* operation of alternation: “Gemeinschaft der Menschen soll sein, oder *das Ich soll mitgeteilt werden.*” (KFSa VII, 15) The imperative of community is inextricably tied to a communicative process. This moves decidedly beyond the dualistic sense of the “alternating principle” projected by Frank, and inserts a *political* dimension into the discourse of *alternation* indicated by Guido Naschert: in addition to *Das Ich setzt sich* und *das ich soll sich setzen*, the third term would be *das ich soll sich mitteilen* – or *the I should communicate itself* – an imperative Schlegel states often in his writings on literary discourse, and one which refers back to the crucial concept of communicativity (*Mittelbarkeit*) as an interactive principle of differentiation. (Leventhal 1994, 278–279) Indeed, it can be persuasively argued that this third component of the alternation – *communication* or *communicability* – actually emerges as *the* mediating, relational force of the three propositions or thetic determinations, as supra-subjective and neces-

27 Thus Behler had it exactly right when he stated that Schlegel eschewed “disciplinary (philosophy) and systematic (doctrine of knowledge) fixation.” (Behler 1996, 398)

sarily interactive mediation or relation on which any positioning and volition actually turn.

Secondly, Schlegel historicizes and temporalizes the “alternating principle” and thereby transforms it from a static *principle* or *proposition* into a *process* or *procedure*, not merely a *Tathandlung* in Fichte’s sense, but as a differentiating process which also underscores its *performative* or *illocutionary* force in opposition to any representational or purely thetic function it might serve. Yet Schlegel’s critical move was not merely, as Werner Hamacher suggested, the *temporalization of the Fichtean fundamental principle* (“Verzeitlichung des Fichteschen Grundsatzes”) (Hamacher 1980, 1179), but rather the oscillating, material instantiation of the “alternating principle” itself as a historico-temporal *event*, a type of *mise-en-scène* or staging of alternation. Alternation sets into motion and temporalizes, to be sure; more importantly, however, it places the Fichtean *Grundsatz* into a field of difference and thereby renders Fichte’s fundamental self-positing contingent and relational. As Schlegel wrote, the unity of the I and the Not-I might be absolute in *theology*, but it is not yet *science*, and this unity is only a part of the *science of knowledge*: “Diese [Einheit, RL] ist aber eigen[tlich] keine eigene Wissenschaft, sondern nur ein Theil d[er] Wissenschaftslehre.” (KFSA XVIII 6, 22) Selfhood, what is a basic theoretical and ahistorical proposition for Fichte, becomes and can only be stated as a self-history or *Selbstgeschichte* for Schlegel: “Die Natur der Selbstgeschichte wäre wichtig für die Theorie der Historie.” (KFSA XVIII, 27, 98) Such a history of the self or “self-history”, according to Schlegel, would be decisive for the *theory* of history. Thus, the propositions “the ‘I’ posits itself” and the “I ought to posit itself” are historical, contingent, derivative rather than absolute for Schlegel, and the “alternating principle” is not simply the two principles in reciprocal relation to one another – a “consortium” according to Manfred Frank (Frank 1996b, 44) – but actual alternation as the anonymous, alternating process itself; *Wechselgrundsatz* means therefore not merely switching or alternating between two distinct principles, but the alternating principle itself as *alternating*, as relational and mobile as opposed to fixed and static.

In accordance with what has been stated concerning a possible disciplinary bias of the idealistic and transcendental readings, it appears as if, within the framework of a transcendental interpretation of the “alternating principle,” the entire problematics of the relation between Philosophy and its historicity, in a word, Philosophy and Philology, or Philosophy and the question of its (historical) interpretation, or

Philosophy and its own hermeneutic, has been sidestepped, i.e. that the disciplinary alternation precisely between the problem of historical interpretation and the search for truth cannot even come to the fore in the idealistic reading. (Oesterreich 2005, 10) This intercession of such a historicizing-temporalizing process of alternation in both disciplines, which must be read as a critique of Philosophy as an ahistorical *Grundwissenschaft*, can be gleaned from the following quote from Schlegel's *Philosophical Fragments* 1796–1797:

κ [Kritik] der φσ [Philosophie] == φλ [Philologie] der φσ [Philosophie], das ist Eins. – Da die φσ [Philosophie] so vieles ja fast alles im Himmel und auf Erden kritisiert hat; so kann sie sichs ja wohl gefallen lassen, dass man sie auch einmal kritisiere. (KFSA XVIII, 41, Nr. 228)

This passage dates from 1797 when the notebooks *Zur Philologie* were written. It constructs a discursive bridge between the philosophical discourse of “alternation” of 1796 and its necessary extension into philology and therefore history. Two processes are occurring simultaneously at the moment of these philological fragments. First, as Behler pointed out and as we know from the letter Schlegel wrote to Niethammer, he had read three important Fichtean texts of 1794–1795 (*On the Concept of the Science of Knowledge* [1794]; *The Foundation of the Entire Science of Knowledge* [1794–1795]; and the *Outline of the Distinctive Character of the Science of Knowledge* [1795])<sup>28</sup> and was now, on the one hand, trying to incorporate Fichte into his study of classical philology, as well as beginning to formulate his *critique* of Fichte and work out his own philosophy. At the very least, we may hypothesize a *clinamen* here with respect to Fichte, Schlegel attempting to distinguish himself from Fichte, and the expression of an extremely ambivalent and conflicted relation to Fichte's philosophy. (Naschert 1996, 47–49) This leads one to conjecture that it is precisely in the confrontation between the two disciplines, precisely in the attempt to work out the relation between Philology and Philosophy, that the alternating principle becomes a real issue for Schlegel. For Schlegel's critique of Philosophy prescribes, as he states, what is essentially a *philology of philosophy*: “χ [Kritik] der φπ [Philosophie] = φλ [Philologie]

28 Letter to Niethammer of 29 November 1795 KFSA XXIII, 258, where Schlegel proposes a review of three of the essential Fichtean writings and mentioned them by title.

der  $\phi\pi$  [Philosophie], das ist Eins." (KFSA XVIII, 40, 228; Leventhal 1994, 282–283; Bowie 1996, 116–135; Bowie 1997, 53–55)

Any account of the *alternating principle* would therefore have to begin by examining the difficult relation between the philological-historical and the philosophical at this point in Schlegel's critical appropriation of idealist philosophy. If a critique of philosophy as a *philology* of philosophy intervenes in the self-determination of philosophy, and the philologist is, in Schlegel's words, "ein historisches Subjekt," (KFSA XVI, 49, Nr. 165) – philology itself having to do with *conditional* knowledge: " $\phi\lambda$  [Philologie] ist Interesse fuer bedingtes Wissen." (KFSA XVI 46, 137) – the ground has been prepared for a material hermeneutics. We would thus have to answer Schlegel's question, in 1797, "<Ist alles bedingte Wissen –  $\phi\lambda$ [philologisch] und historisch?>" (KFSA XVI, 46, 137) in the affirmative. At this time, Schlegel was at the crossroads, so to speak, intersecting two disciplines and seeking to articulate a set of questions that would bring the disciplines into discussion with one another without resigning or relegating one to the other. The decisive shift in Schlegel's discourse 1796–97 was to maintain the tension between the two tendencies. The transcendental itself must be historicized as a method of excavating the historical conditions of the possibility of any form of science. Once the transcendental strategy has been historicized, it can then become another tool in the interpretive apparatus while at the same time an object of ongoing criticism itself.

In sum, I would urge a corrective to what has been in my view an overly idealistic identification and transcendental reading (Behler and Frank), or "transcendental pragmatic" interpretation (Naschert) of Schlegel's "alternating principle" (*Wechselerweis*) in the period 1796–1797. First and foremost, alternation must be pluralized, made manifold and variegated, so that we speak with Schlegel of "alternating principles" instead of the one master alternating "principle." As Schlegel states regarding the discipline of philosophy: "Die  $\phi$  [Philosophie] muß mit unendlich vielen Sätzen anfangen, der Entstehung nach (nicht mit einem)." (KFSA XVIII 26, 93) Secondly, the alternating principles cannot be grounded in, nor can they function as the ground for, anything resembling the "fundamental structures of consciousness," even if this consciousness is to be conceived in transcendental, intersubjective terms, or in purely speculative terms, rather than within the framework of the individual subject. The *Wechselerweis* of consciousness – the opposition and reciprocal relation between the "I" and the "Not-I" – constitutes a very basic, primitive and limited

enactment of the “alternating principle,” and represents an *extension* of the historical, hermeneutic-philological, and ethical-political alternating principles, where it first attains its real existence, rather than an originary source of such alternations. Third, alternation operates not merely within the constantly alternating, differential communicativity between *subjects*, but within the various *modalities of scientific disciplines*, e.g. grammar, criticism and interpretation in the case of philology, and between *scientific disciplines*, e.g. philosophy and philology, philosophy and history, logic and history. Only as a series of polemical, enhancing, heightening intersubjective and interdisciplinary operations or processes can *Wechselerweis* achieve its adequate profile in Schlegel’s philosophical discourse 1796–97.

To delimit and define alternation in terms of a discussion of transcendental conditions or as a foundational structure of consciousness (Naschert), to adhere to the idealist reading of the alternating principle that has dominated scholarship in this area since Behler’s and Frank’s interventions thus seems to foreclose the possible *alternation* that Schlegel’s texts sought to set in motion. If we allow the alternating principle to simply replace the Fichtean thetic postulate, or reinscribe it within the horizon of a transcendental pragmatics, we have surely lost the rhetorical, performative force of Schlegel’s provocation, which was precisely to have us take leave of the foundationalist framework and open the philosophical discipline itself to interferences from other disciplines such as history, philology, and literature. I suggest we return to the alternations of Schlegel’s texts and their terms, in the sense of a *material hermeneutics* that does not subsume the manifold of interpretation under a single, univocal principle, concept, or set of ahistorical transcendental conditions. Such a material hermeneutics rather proceeds, as Schlegel stated in *Zur Philologie*, as a *micrology* from the specifics of the material itself to more general principles. (Arndt 1997, 6; Leventhal 2007) Such a material hermeneutics continues the *alternating principles* as a series of interpretive actions, as a manifold still to be enacted and interpreted, as an *Aufgabe* or task. Such movements of alternation serve neither identity nor coherence, but rather processes of subjective, disciplinary and political self-displacement and/or differentiation, deemed by Schlegel to be impossible within the completely specular, enclosed, and circular movement of Fichte’s system, between otherwise fixed positions or principles. In this sense, Schlegel’s “alternating principles” functioned as *discourse* to destabilize calcified concepts and disciplines, and open up areas of study in which the disciplines and their derivative sciences could

henceforth be progressively articulated in terms of *limits* and *relations*, two of the modern “categories” of philological inquiry according to Schlegel: “– Weit mehr muß insistirt werden auf den *Historismus*, der zur Philol. [Philologie] nothwendig. Auf *Geist*, gegen den Buchstaben. Das gehört mit zum Historismus, so wie auch Gesetze, Arten, Stufen, Gränzen, Verhältnisse pp Ganzheit pp <Lage, Classizität>.” (KFSA XVI, 35, 8) Through the supplementarity<sup>29</sup> provided by intra- and interdisciplinary alternation and oscillating confirmation, Schlegel’s discourse on and of alternation staked out the interdependency and historicity of the human sciences without grounding them in a single, ahistorical principle, concept, discipline, foundation, or set of conditions: “*Niemand versteht sich selbst, in so fern er nur er selbst und nicht zugleich ein anderer ist.* [Schlegel’s italics, RL] Z.B. wer zugleich φλ [Philolog] und φσ [Philosoph] ist, versteht seine φσ [Philosophie] durch seine φλ [Philologie] und seine φλ [Philologie] durch seine φσ [Philosophie].” (KFSA XVIII, 84, Nr. 651) Precisely in this regard, in its resistance to originary grounding and mono-disciplinary fixation, Schlegel’s *Wechselerweis* distinguishes itself from the dominant transcendental strategies of idealist philosophy of this period.

This statement from Schlegel’s *Philosophische Fragmente. Erste Epoche. II* of 1797 tells us much not only about *Wechselerweis*, but about Schlegel’s specific contribution to early German romantic philosophy. *Modern philosophy*, Schlegel argued, has three important characteristics: first, it has no *absolute ground*, only a series of alternating principles; secondly, modern philosophy is *historical*, always in a state of becoming;<sup>30</sup> and, finally, it must be *systematic* in the sense that it must necessarily traverse subjective, intersubjective, and disciplinary boundaries; that is, it cannot exist without entering into a conversation with the disciplines of the human sciences. To the extent that we engage in “study” (*Studium*), which for Schlegel was precisely reading, writing, and communicating across such disciplines (history, logic, rhetoric, higher and lower criticism, aesthetics, poetry and literature), we are able to forge contingent and conditional historical interpretations. Such a network of historical, interdisciplinary “alter-

29 On the logic of the *supplement* in Schlegel’s early texts, see Wellbery 1987, especially 164–167.

30 Compare Plug 2004, 33: “Philosophy now emerges as a process, one that Friedrich Schlegel describes in chemical terms and as composed of ‘living, fundamental forces’.” “Necessarily always in a state of becoming, philosophy ‘always must organize and disorganize itself anew.’”

nating principles” or *Wechselerweise* as a propaedeutic to any material hermeneutics is still decisive today. Operating at the intersections of modern human scientific disciplines, *Wechselerweis* explicitly opened up an interdisciplinary area for the interaction between philosophy, philology, and history, suspending disciplinary boundaries in the process. A genealogy of the theory and practice of interdisciplinary programs and cultural studies at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and in the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries would thus have to begin with Friedrich Schlegel and this critical aspect of early German romantic philosophy.

### Bibliography/Literaturverzeichnis

- Altenhofer, Norbert: „Geselliges Betragen – Kunst – Auslegung. Anmerkungen zu Peter Szondis Schleiermacher-Auslegung und zur Frage einer materialen Hermeneutik“. In: *Studien zur Entwicklung einer materialen Hermeneutik*, hg. von Ulrich Nassen. Paderborn; München; Wien: F. Schöningh 1979, 165–211.
- Arndt, Andreas: „Philosophie der Philologie‘: Historisch-Kritische Bemerkungen zur philosophischen Bestimmung von Editionen“. In: *Editio* 11, 1997, 1–19.
- Behler, Ernst: „Schlegels frühe Position in der Ausbildung der idealistischen Philosophie“. In: *KFSA* VIII, XXI–LIII, 1963.
- Behler, Ernst: *Frühromantik*. Berlin; New York: de Gruyter 1992.
- Behler, Ernst: „Friedrich Schlegel’s Theory of an Alternating Principle prior to his arrival in Jena (6 August 1796)“. In: *Revue internationale de philosophie* 50, no. 197/3, 1996, 383–402.
- Beiser, Frederick: *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of German Romanticism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2003.
- Benjamin, Walter: *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1973.
- Bollack, Jean: „Zukunft im Vergangenen. Peter Szondis materiale Hermeneutik“. In: *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 64/1, 1990, 370–390.
- Bowie, Andrew: „The Philology of Philosophy‘: the Romantic Heritage and Contemporary Literary Theory“. In: *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 64/5, 1996, 116–135.
- Bowie, Andrew: *From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory*. London; New York: Routledge 1997.
- Critchley, Simon: „Very Little...Almost Nothing.“ London; New York: Routledge 2004.

- Critchley, Simon: „Cavell's ‚Romanticism‘ and Cavell's Romanticism“. In: *Contending with Stanley Cavell*, hg. von Russell B. Goodman. New York: Oxford University Press 2005, 37–54.
- Dierkes, Hans: *Literaturgeschichte als Kritik*. Tübingen: Niemeyer 1980.
- Elsässer, Michael (Hg.): *Friedrich Schlegel. Transzendentalphilosophie*. Hamburg: F. Meiner 1991.
- Fichte, J.G.: *Sämmtliche Werke*. Berlin: Veit. 1845–46, Rpt: Berlin: de Gruyter 1965 (SW).
- Frank, Manfred: „Alle Wahrheit ist relativ, Alles Wissen symbolisch“. In: *Revue internationale de Philosophie* 50, 197, 1996, 403–411. (Frank 1996a)
- Frank, Manfred: „Wechselgrundsatz.‘ Friedrich Schlegels philosophischer Ausgangspunkt“. In: *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 50, 1996, 26–50. (Frank 1996b)
- Frank, Manfred: „Unendliche Annäherung“. *Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1997.
- Frank, Manfred: *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, trans. Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert, Albany: SUNY Press 2003.
- Franks, Paul: *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2005.
- Graubner, Hans: „Mitteilbarkeit und Lebensgefühl in Kants ‚Kritik der Urteilskraft‘“. In: *Urszenen. Literaturwissenschaft als Diskursanalyse und Kritik*, hg. von Friedrich Kittler und Horst Turk. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1977, 53–75.
- Hamacher, Werner: „Der Satz der Gattung. Friedrich Schlegels poetologische Umsetzung von Fichtes unbedingtem Grundsatz“. In: *MLN* 95/5, 1980, 1155–1180.
- Henrich, Dieter: „Fichte's Original Insight“. In: *Contemporary German Philosophy* 1, hg. von Darrel Christianson; Manfred Riedel; Robert Spaemann; Wolfgang Wieland. University Park: Penn State University Press 1982, 15–52.
- Henrich, Dieter: *Konstellationen. Probleme und Debatten am Ursprung der idealistischen Philosophie (1789–1795)*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1991.
- Henrich, Dieter: *Grund im Bewusstsein*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1992.
- Israel, Jonathan I.: *Enlightenment Contested. Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670–1752*. New York: Oxford 2006.
- Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe; Nancy, Jean-Luc: *The Literary Absolute. The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*. Buffalo; Albany: SUNY Press 1988.
- Lauth, Reinhard: „Fichte Verhältnis zu Jacobi unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Rolle Fr. Schlegels in dieser Sache“. In: *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. Philosoph und Literat der Goethzeit*, hg. von Klaus Hammacher. Frankfurt: Klostermann 1971, 165–197.



- Leventhal, Robert: *The Disciplines of Interpretation. Lessing, Herder, Schlegel and Hermeneutics in Germany, 1750–1800*. Berlin: de Gruyter 1994.
- Leventhal, Robert: „Ein vorbildliches Beispiel‘: Friedrich Schlegels Spinoza-Lektüre und die Entstehung seiner Hermeneutik 1795–1798“. In: *Spinoza in der Literatur*, hg. von Manfred Walther u.a. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2007. (forthcoming)
- Meninghaus, Winfried: *Die unendliche Verdoppelung. Die frühromantische Grundlegung der Kunsttheorie im Begriff absoluter Selbstreflexion*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1987.
- Michel, Willy: *Ästhetische Hermeneutik und frühromantische Kritik*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1982.
- Naschert, Guido: „Friedrich Schlegel über Wechselerweis und Ironie I“. In: *Athenäum. Jahrbuch für Romantik* 6, 1996, 47–90.
- Naschert, Guido: „Friedrich Schlegel über Wechselerweis und Ironie II“. In: *Athenäum. Jahrbuch für Romantik* 7, 1997, 11–36.
- Oesterreich, Peter L.: „Schlegel’s Theory of History and his Critique of Idealistic Reason“. In: *The Discovery of Historicity in German Idealism and Historism*, hg. von Peter Koslowski. New York; Berlin: Springer 2005, 9–22.
- Ostermann, Eberhard: „Das Interessante als Element ästhetischer Authentizität“. In: *Authentizität als Darstellung*, hg. von Jan Berg; Hans-Otto Hügel; Hajo Kurzenberger. Hildesheim 1997, 197–215.
- Plug, Jan: „Romanticism and the Invention of Literature“. In: *Idealism without Absolutes: Philosophy and Romantic Culture*, hg. von Tilottama Rajan; Arkady Plotnitsky. Albany: SUNY Press 2004, 15–37.
- Rastier, François: „L’herméneutique matérielle“. In: *Le Discours philosophique*, hg. von J.-F. Mattei. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1998. (*L’Encyclopédie philosophique universelle*, t. IV), 1902–1915.
- Rorty, Richard: *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1979.
- Schlaffer, Heinz: *Poesie und Wissen. Die Entstehung des ästhetischen Bewusstseins und der philologischen Erkenntnis*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1990.
- Schlegel, Friedrich: *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe*, hg. von Ernst Behler, unter Mitwirkung von Jean-Jacques Anstett und Hans Eichner. München; Paderborn; Wien: F. Schöningh 1958. (KFSA)
- Schwyder, Peter: *Die Magie der Rhetorik. Poesie, Philosophie und Politik in Friedrich Schlegels Frühwerk*. Paderborn; München; Wien; Zürich: Schöningh Verlag 1999.
- Szondi, Peter: *Einführung in die literarische Hermeneutik*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1975.
- Wellbery, David E.: „Rhetorik und Literatur: Anmerkungen zur poetologischen Begriffsbildung bei Friedrich Schlegel“. In: *Die Aktualität der*

*Frühromantik*, hg. von Ernst Behler und Jochen Hörisch. Paderborn; München; Wien: F. Schöningh 1987, 161–173.

Zovko, Jure: *Verstehen und Nichtverstehen bei Friedrich Schlegel*. Stuttgart; Bad Cannstatt: Frommann Holzboog 1990.